

# Federal funding for the arts

## SUPPORT

**Rep. Louise Slaughter**  
D-N.Y.



Art plays a central role in American culture, preserving our history and traditions. The National Endowment for the Arts promotes America's diverse artistic legacy in every corner of this nation, strengthening local economies, improving education for our children and bringing communities together.

The arts industry generates \$134 billion annually in economic activity, provides 4.9 million full-time jobs, creates \$89.4 billion in household income and returns more than \$10 billion to the U.S. Treasury. All this for a meager investment of \$121 million by

Congress.

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Just as they support our economy, the arts support our children's futures. Studies prove that arts education helps kids perform better, communicate better and behave better.

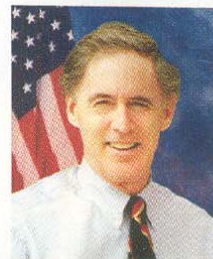
The arts also play an important role in the military. Art therapy, an effective way to cope with trauma, was developed during World War II. Recovering GIs lifted their spirits by re-enacting old radio scripts and plays. Today, thousands of VA patients enjoy creative activities through recreation therapy services. The NEA will also announce initiatives to bring writing projects and Shakespeare plays to military bases across the United States.

Art records our military history and preserves military traditions. Each branch has history museums that house thousands of pieces of art. These paintings, drawings, sculptures and photographs capture some of the most tragic, heroic and emotional chapters of our nation's history in meaningful ways. And what American wouldn't recognize the spirited songs that distinguish each military branch, played by their very own bands?

The NEA helps ensure that the arts will continue to play an important role in our society and will be accessible to all Americans. Congress' modest investment in the NEA – a tiny fraction of the \$2 trillion federal budget – yields an enormous impact on our economy. The intellectual, educational and therapeutic return on that funding, however, is priceless.

**Rep. Cliff Stearns**  
R-Fla.

## OPPOSE



Art provides avenues for individuals to express themselves, to share thoughts or visions. Art is as creative and boundless as the human imagination. Marcel Proust said, "Only through art can we get outside ourselves and know another's view of the universe."

During the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, delegate Charles Pinckney proposed government funding for the arts and sciences. The founding fathers rejected the proposal, deciding the only appropriate role for government in the arts and sciences is providing patent and copyright protection for the work of artists, authors and inventors.

Yet, the federal government eventually found ways to support the arts. With the initiation of the federal income-tax code in 1913, Congress recognized the national benefits of nonprofit organizations, including art groups, by giving them tax-exempt status. Later, contributions to these nonprofit groups were made tax-deductible.

Today, the federal government supports more than 200 programs for the arts and humanities scattered among the federal agencies. Federal funding for the arts and humanities exceeds \$1 billion this year through such organizations as the National Gallery of Art, the Commission of Fine Arts and of course, the National Endowment for the Arts.

The administration has requested an increase for the NEA from \$121 million to \$139.4 million for fiscal year 2005. I believe it should be reduced or, at the very least, kept at the current level.

An economic slowdown, the attacks of Sept. 11 and the resulting war on terrorism have brought about record deficits. It is imperative that every government program be scrutinized with an eye toward reducing government spending.

A 15-percent increase in funding for a program that neither helps veterans meet their health-care needs nor shields us from terrorism is inappropriate. Instead, the NEA cries out for a budget freeze or cuts.

### YOUR OPINIONS COUNT

Senators and representatives are interested in constituent viewpoints. You may express your views in writing at the following addresses:

**The Honorable (name)**  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  
Phone: (202) 224-3121

**The Honorable (name)**  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-3121